

This Page Is Inserted by IFW Operations  
and is not a part of the Official Record

## **BEST AVAILABLE IMAGES**

Defective images within this document are accurate representations of the original documents submitted by the applicant.

Defects in the images may include (but are not limited to):

- BLACK BORDERS
- TEXT CUT OFF AT TOP, BOTTOM OR SIDES
- FADED TEXT
- ILLEGIBLE TEXT
- SKEWED/SLANTED IMAGES
- COLORED PHOTOS
- BLACK OR VERY BLACK AND WHITE DARK PHOTOS
- GRAY SCALE DOCUMENTS

**IMAGES ARE BEST AVAILABLE COPY.**

**As rescanning documents *will not* correct images,  
please do not report the images to the  
Image Problem Mailbox.**



D3  
PATENT

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS CORRESPONDENCE  
IS BEING DEPOSITED WITH THE U.S. POSTAL  
SERVICE AS FIRST CLASS MAIL IN AN ENVELOPE  
ADDRESSED TO: MAIL STOP AF, COMMISSIONER  
FOR PATENTS, P.O. Box 1450, Alexandria,  
VA 22313-1450, ON

*June 17, 2003*

*Anita J. Haler*

SIGNATURE

DATE

*H18B*  
COPY

IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

Applicants : Gilbert M. Aust et al.  
Serial No. : 09/707,445  
Filing Date : November 6, 2000  
For : SURGICAL INSTRUMENT  
Group Art Unit : 3731  
Examiner : Michael H. Thaler  
Attorney Docket No. : A31-2047RE

**BOX AF**

Commissioner for Patents  
P.O. Box 1450  
Alexandria, VA 22313-1450

RECEIVED  
JUL 18 2003  
TECHNOLOGY CENTER 4370U

AMENDMENT AFTER FINAL REJECTION

Introductory Comments

Sir:

In response to the Office Action dated April 24, 2003,  
please reconsider the above-identified application in view of  
the following amendment.

STATUS OF CLAIMS:

Claims 1, 2, and 4 have been allowed.

Claims 8 and 9 have been canceled.

Claims 3, 5-7, 10, and 11 stand rejected.